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15 MAR 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT : The NASA Earth Resources Survey
Program (NERSP)

REFERENCE : Report of the NSAM 156 Committee on
"Political and Security Aspects of
Non-Military Applications of Satellite
Earth-Sensing"

1. The Office of Special Projects (OSP) has conducted a review of the agreements and studies relating to the DOD/NASA coordination of the Earth Resources Program (NERSP).

2. Several years of study work has gone into the agreements. In addition to the NSAM 156 Committee, USIB, COMCR, the NRC, and a group known as the Survey Applications Coordinating Committee (SACC) have contributed memoranda on the subject of cooperation on DOD and NASA space activities.

3. Most of the studies relating to the use of KH photography or KH systems in the NASA Earth Resources Program have been written with the primary attention on security and, therefore, tend to be negative. The NSAM 156 Committee has recognized the potential benefits from a national standpoint and recommended further action on the part of the DCI.

4. The major objections to the use of KH satellite photography in the NASA Earth Resources Program have been:

a. Protection of intelligence sources and methods;

b. Cost and complexity associated with downgrading of TMH materials;

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c. Political problems emanating from officially acknowledged U. S. satellite reconnaissance.

5. The political issue in most cases has been interwoven with security matters, and hence a clear-cut U. S. Government position is not directly available. The NSAM 156 Committee report takes cognizance of the fact that the NASA-Genint program and the weather satellites have both produced photography of large portions of the earth's surface. Although not covered in the report, it is noteworthy that the distribution of these photographs has been handled on a purely unclassified basis. It appears, therefore, that open satellite photography can be carried out without political repercussion under the proper circumstances. This is one of the underlying themes in the NSAM 156 Committee report. Our analysis of the problem has shown us that among necessary criteria are:

a. Scientific or humanitarian goals for the program and research rather than resolution objectives in the selection of the type of photography;

b. Large area coverages rather than point targeting. Camera programming, of course, is necessary since it would be undesirable to photograph areas of no scientific interest. It is clear, however, that for most research purposes a panoramic camera or framing camera is better suited than a strip or spotting type camera;

c. Coverage only of U. S. areas or foreign areas where cooperative research objectives exist and production and distribution of useful reports from the program.

6. From the criteria outlined, we have concluded that the TKN materials presently available would have only limited value in the Earth Resources Program. The photography is largely of the Sino-Soviet Bloc or of military targets in the non-Bloc areas. It has been taken for intelligence purposes and is black and white coverage repeated

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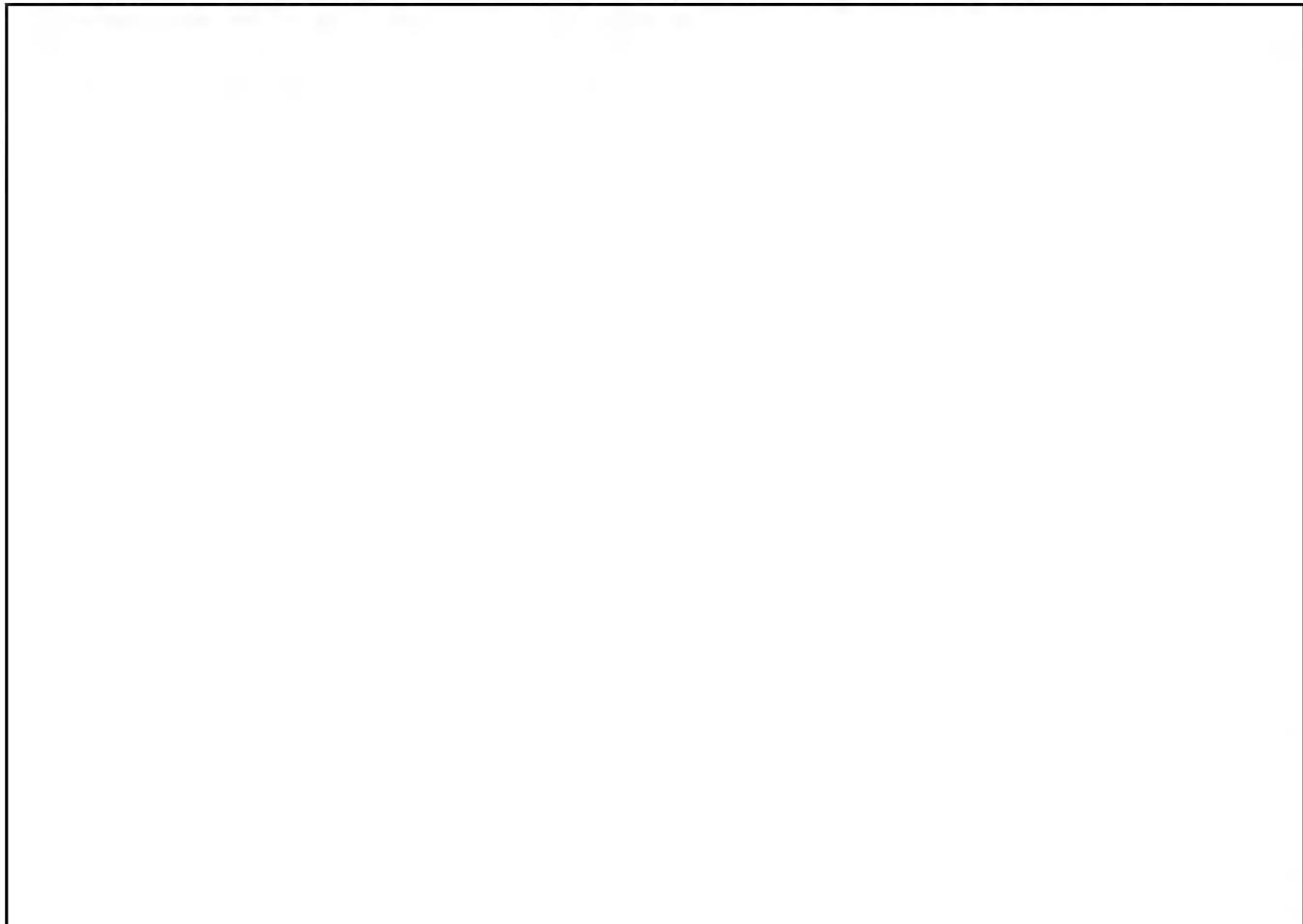
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each mission [redacted]. It would appear, therefore, that the question of downgrading TKH material should be dropped, and that NASA should collect new coverages specifically selected for the earth resources analysis. This would vastly simplify security problems associated with the TKH control system, would avoid disclosure of targeting used on past TKH mission, would eliminate the cost aspects associated with the downgrading, and would allow from the outset an unclassified scientific atmosphere to the NASA program.

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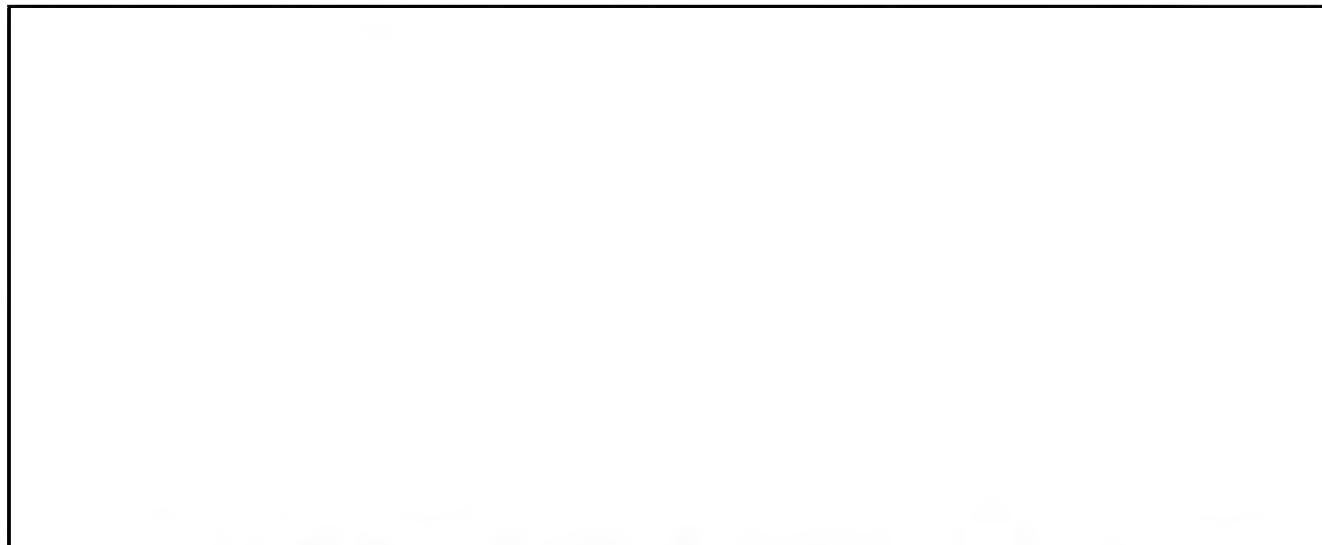
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10. The NSAM 156 Committee outlined in their report a number of goals, suggestions and/or recommendations relative to satellite earth-sensing and the use of KH systems. A reasonable approach for cooperation between the NRO, CIA, and NASA on earth resources consistent with the national goals could be developed along the following lines:

a. CIA/DD/S&T/CSP could provide briefings for cleared NASA personnel on the [redacted] Program and the applications of the KH-4B system to earth resources.

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b. With NRO/COMOR support, the NASA interests in U. S. areas could be factored into the KH-4B photographic coverages. For an example, [redacted] KH-4 photography was programmed to assist in assessment of flood devastation in Texas, to survey gold resources in Alaska, and to survey the area associated with a U. S. Army Corp of Engineers canal project proposed in the Great Lakes region. Stateside materials can be made available to selected NASA personnel at a Top Secret classification without requirements for TKH storage and control. Stateside engineering coverages are provided to selected contractor personnel at the present time under similar security arrangements.

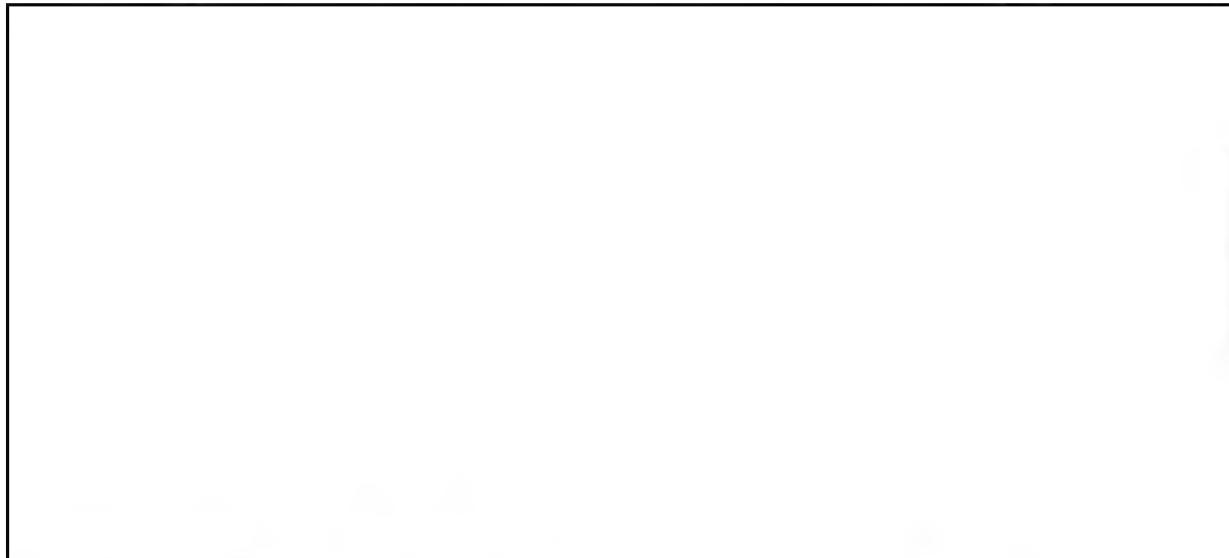
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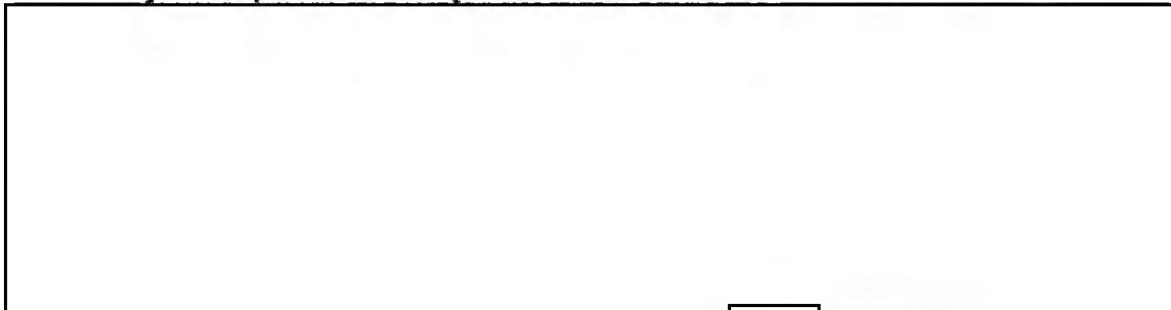
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e. CIA can procure, test, and deliver to NASA in 1970 several KH-4B payload systems. Cost of a KH-4B payload is [redacted]. The payloads could be launched by NASA from the NASA Thor pads at Vandenberg as recommended by the NSAM 156 Committee. Air Force support could be provided in the area of tracking and recovery. NASA/Air Force recovery cooperation on an unclassified basis has already been accomplished on NASA's Biosatellite Program.

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A DoD/NASA unclassified agreement would remove CIA participation from possible disclosure.

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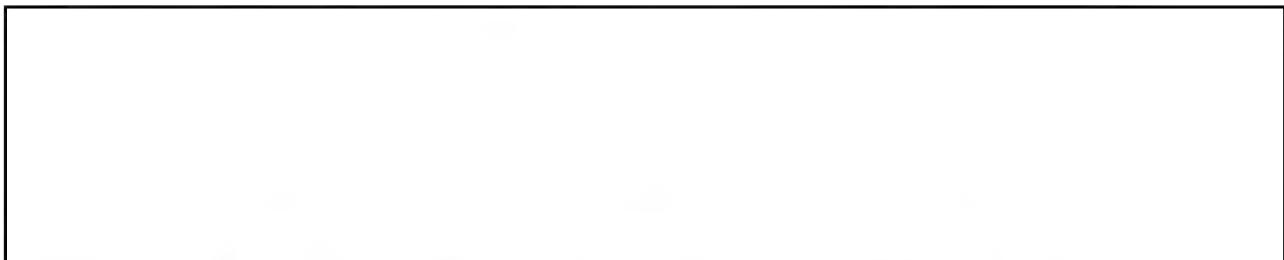
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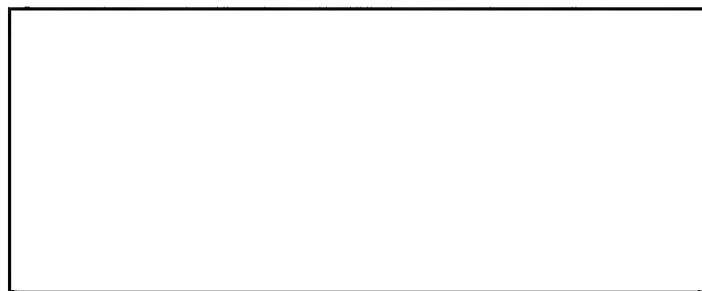
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13. The Office of Special Projects can provide the necessary support to the DD/S&T in the coordination and conduct of the planning.

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